

Anti-Social Behaviour

Cotswold District Council's Role in Preventing and Tackling Anti Social Behaviour

Cotswold District Council has an important role to play in helping residents feel safe in their communities. Our Community Safety team works with the police, the County Council, town and parish councils and other key partners and groups to help tackle and reduce crime and the fear of crime. Anti social behaviour is an aspect of life that can make people feel insecure and affect their quality of life.

An important member of our **Community Safety team** is the **Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator** whose post is funded by the Home Office as part of the government's initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Levels of anti-social behaviour are relatively low in the Cotswolds so the focus is on working with groups and communities to improve understanding and tolerance. The aim is to prevent anti-social behaviour but will also involve working to tackle problems when they do occur.

Below we explain a bit more about anti social behaviour is and what legislation is available to help us tackle it. If you are concerned about any of the issues mentioned below, **please call the Community Safety Team on:**

- **01285 623000**

What is anti social behaviour?

Anti-social behaviour means different things to different people, often depending on the type of behaviour they are facing, their own tolerance levels and the location where the incidents are taking place. Generally speaking, anti-social behaviour is an action likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress. It is behaviour that prevents others from enjoying an acceptable quality of life.

Examples of anti-social behaviour may include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- **Environmental crime:**

Environmental crime includes littering, abandoned vehicles, graffiti, fly posting, dog fouling, fly-tipping, dumped business waste, vandalism, abandoned shopping trolleys and noise nuisance. Its presence encourages a spiral of decline, which can undermine

community cohesion and the efforts of public agencies. When graffiti, fly tipping and litter are allowed to take over an area, other forms of anti-social behaviour seem more normal and are more likely to be tolerated too.

To report environmental crime online now, please use the Report It link below

- **Street scene:**

Public spaces should feel safe, welcoming and vibrant. Shopping areas and parades, town centres, parks and green spaces should be free from intimidation, harassment and anti-social behaviour.

An anti-social street scene, with begging, street drinking, a street sex market or groups of people hanging around can make people feel unsafe. Litter, fly posting, graffiti and other criminal damage also degrade the street environment and are major factors in determining people's quality of life, perception of personal safety and attitude towards public services.

- **Nuisance neighbours:**

There are a small number of families whose persistent anti-social behaviour has a direct effect on whole communities. They can live in any type of housing. They are in essence people or families who show a selfish inability or unwillingness to recognize when their behaviour is offensive to others and refuse to take responsibility for it. They show a lack of regard for the community and disrespect for other peoples' quality of life and enjoyment of the local area.

This type of anti-social behaviour may include, but is not restricted to, the following: intimidation and harassment, noise, rowdy and nuisance behaviour, hoax calls, animal related problems and vehicle related nuisance.

What can be done to deal with anti social behaviour?

Using legislation within the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 and the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003 the District Council, Police, Statutory and other Voluntary Organisations such as landlords, regularly share information on the anti-social and criminal activity of offenders.

The organisation receiving the complaint of anti-social behaviour can take one or more of the following actions, depending on the severity or number of incidents the offender has been involved in;

- **Involve other agencies**
- **Write to the offender** (and their guardian if a juvenile)
- **Visit the offender** (and their guardian if a juvenile)
- **Mediation:** a way of resolving disputes by helping people involved to reach an agreement with the help of an impartial third party - the mediator.
- **Arrest the offender** - if evidence and powers permit
- **Preventative work**
- **Diversionsary schemes**
- **Acceptable Behaviour Contract (an ABC):** This is a voluntary written agreement between a person involved in anti-social behaviour and one or more local agencies, for example Police and Housing. ABC's are most commonly used for young people but may also be used for adults. The contract specifies a list of anti-social acts the person has been involved in and which they now agree to cease.
- **Enforcement of tenancy agreements:** under a tenancy agreement the tenant is responsible for their own behaviour, the behaviour of all members of their own household (including children) and the behaviour of any visitors. If any of these persons cause a serious nuisance, even in the area around their home, the landlord can seek to evict the tenant.
- **Convene a case conference:** this is a multi-agency meeting is held to discuss the subject's anti-social behaviour and any surrounding issues. Any interventions are intended to provide support and an opportunity to stop the unacceptable behaviour
- **Injunctions:** this is an order obtained in the County Court to do or not to do a specific act or actions. Applies to people over 18. The order can have a power of arrest attached. Breaches are punishable by fine or imprisonment.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO):** this is an order imposed in the Civil Court or following conviction for a criminal offence in the Magistrates, Youth and Crown Court. An order contains conditions prohibiting the offender from specific anti-social acts or entering defined areas. The minimum duration of an ASBO is two years, the maximum life, depending on the age of the offender and seriousness of the behaviour. Local Authorities, the Police (including British Transport Police), Housing Action Trusts and Registered Social Landlords can apply for an ASBO. Failure to carry out the conditions of the order is a criminal offence and arrestable. It is punishable by imprisonment of up to 5 years; a fine not exceeding £5,000 or both.
- **Parenting Order:** this is a Civil Order lasting up to 12 months. Parents are ordered to take responsibility for and to address the anti-social behaviour of their children. They could be required to attend parenting sessions, or make sure that their children attend school, avoid certain places and come home by a certain

time at night. A parent can be fined up to £1,000 for not keeping to the order.

- **Eviction**

Community Safety

CommunitySafety@cotswold.gov.uk

Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire,
GL7 1PX

Telephone: 01285 623000